

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Employment &amp; Training Subcommittee</b> <b>Office of Homelessness and Emergency Assistance</b> <b>RI Housing Resources Commission</b></p>
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**MINUTES of MEETING 2/12/04 (5<sup>th</sup>)**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Michael Tondra of Municipal Affairs/DOA, Diane Cook of DHS, Jay Burdick of DHS, Karen Russell of ORS/DHS, Michelle Malloy, Corporation of Supportive Housing, Leigh Pagnozzi, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Peter Wells, Public Defenders Office, Deb Christal, Goodwill Industries, Kevin Gianavitti, House of Hope, Judy Titzel, Gov's Adult Literacy Task Force, Joe Potenza, Travelers Aid, Keisha Martin, Advent House, Pamela Hunt, URI College of Pharmacy for the MIG of URI/DHS, Sr. Teresa Foley, RI DOC, Joanne Soprano, netWORKri, and Sasha Warner-Berry, Gov's Adult Literacy Task Force

Introductions were made due to many new attendees at this meeting.

**HISTORY** – Because so many of those in attendance on this date were new to the group, Jay Burdick provided a re-cap. In short, in response to a grant solicitation from HUD and USDOL last summer which required a cooperative agreement among providers in housing, homelessness, and employment & training, it became apparent that Rhode Island's "system" was less a system and more of a "landscape". This group aims to raise the level of awareness among all interested parties of what services presently exist, to articulate shared goals, to analyze gaps, and to undertake projects and build a system collaboratively. Michael Tondra noted there are upcoming opportunities for both funding and collaboration, eg prison re-entry and CDBG.

**MEETING CHAIR** – A short discussion was held about the manner in which the meetings have been chaired to date (in essence, free form) and the preference for Co-Chairpersons, one from workforce development, one with expertise in housing or homelessness services or funding. Joanne Soprano of netWORKri Providence agreed to act as Co-Chair from the perspective of the workforce development system. She suggested meetings be held either at the end of the day or beginning, and if possible kept to 1 hour to accommodate everyone's busy schedules. Other suggestions from group members included rotating the Chairperson role and rotating the site of the meetings. March's meeting will still be at DHS, but April will be at netWORKri. The Coalition, among others, offered to host a meeting, as well. A representative from the housing/homelessness/provider/funding sector still needs to be identified. The topic was placed on March's agenda.

**WEB PRESENCE** - Michael provided a copy of the minutes of last meeting and a print-out of the web newsletter. Therein, he'd articulated a possible mission, purpose, and objectives for this group. It was understood the statement may be a work-in-progress. It appears, however, comprehensive and quite adequate for this group at this point in its development. Michael will make a minor change and post to the website.

Discussion was held about the website and list-serves. Michael was thanked for the work he has done to date. The forums appear to satisfy the communication needs for those in attendance and it is expected to be useful to other providers to whom this group will outreach, eg literacy and educational providers. He reminded all that the bulletin board and list-serve is hosted by a third party, thus the Dept. of Administration is not responsible for advertisements or like messages that may accompany the service. It was agreed that the minutes of all meetings be posted, as well. Michael requested members supply web addresses for appropriate links, ripolicy.org and RIWLC.org (for an on-line directory of literacy providers), and netWORKri.org . Members were encouraged to sign up for the list-serve and encourage other colleagues to do so, as well. Michael noted he is actively seeking an EDC representative to join this group.

**SPRING CONFERENCE** - Jay reported having spoken with Noreen Shawcross yesterday re: Salve Regina's plans for a Conference. It turns out the conference would be geared toward CAP agencies and only a workshop would have been devoted to the topic of homeless and employment & training. He said Noreen is working on another conference for the Fall 2004 in which this topic might constitute one track. That conference would aim to include those focused on economic development and housing, too. It was suggested – if the Salve contact person could be identified – that this group consider doing a workshop within the Salve conference as a kind of warm-up and broadcast. It was agreed, otherwise, to move forward on the idea of organizing as a track within the Coalition biannual conference.

**FUTURE PROJECTS** – Members were asked to examine the possibilities for other projects (aside from educational/workshops) that need to be done and might be accomplished or coordinated by this group. Michael inquired if there was a single page summary of hiring incentives applicable to homeless/others with barriers to employment that clients or advocates could share with employers when undertaking job searches. Joanne Soprano indicated that netWORKri and DLT have something quite similar and it will be shared at the next meeting. Peter Wells from the Public Defender's Office noted that he works with people on probation and parole who need employment to avoid going to prison. Connecting employment resources is one of the goals of the Employer Service Network under the auspices of netWORKri – it is a collaboration among community based agencies, usually private non-profits, and public agencies, all of which are focused, in whole or in part, upon workforce development services for a variety of job seekers. These agencies have connections to employers and have agreed to serve both the employer and their job seekers in a cooperative way to leverage limited resources for maximum results.

#### **INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

- Pamela Hunt will leave this group and the Medicaid Infrastructure grant to take a position as Executive Director of a senior center in nearby Massachusetts.
- Theresa Foley reported a change in COMPASS. She reminded members that every state had received \$2 million for the prisoner re-entry process. There were 5 federal partners and the biggest funder was USDOL. In Rhode Island, an RFP for employment-related services was answered by the Paxson group, but it has just

- withdrawn. Those already working on the project re-organized themselves and created Liberty Workforce Services. It already has a long list of referrals. There are pre-employment workshops operating at Minimum Security now. Liberty Workforce Services is operating both a temp agency and a kind of sheltered workshop/contract workshop and has plans for expansion. There is a facility on Gordon Ave. and ex-offenders are working there now and paid daily. DHS is setting up a housing referral service, and Sister Foley explained that ideally there might be a direct connection between paydays and rent, for those who are willing.
- Michelle Malloy reported that CSH is willing to do a workshop for this group, in whatever forum, about supportive housing and employment. She will e-mail everyone about an upcoming bus tour to Ct. to view a program in action. There is also an April 1<sup>st</sup> presentation at Casey Family Services about creating permanent supportive housing. And, she reported that Operation Stand-Down (veteran homeless) is buying property in West Warwick for an employment/training facility and has received half its needed funding from the Housing Resources Commission.
  - Judy Titzel, working through the Economic Policy Council for the Governor's Adult Literacy Task Force, is about to undertake a survey (such as this group has done) to better draw the existing landscape and capacity vis-à-vis adult literacy services. She reminded everyone that these providers also conduct training that could be accessed by those who are homeless. Literacy, training, employment, housing and supportive services are all entwined in the economic development of our state.
  - Joanne Soprano reported the Providence netWORKri Center's pre-GED resources are stretched to maximum with youth in need of services. She also described a successful collaborative project with Corrections in which Providence netWORKri had been involved in helping pre-release prisoners obtain employment.

**NEXT MEETINGS AND AGENDA** – Meetings are likely to be held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month for the foreseeable future, all beginning at 9am unless otherwise indicated.

- March 18, 2004, 9:00am, DHS, Louis Pasteur Bldg.
- April 15, 2004, 9:00, netWORKri Providence, 1 Reservoir Avenue

Agenda for March:

- Identification of Co-Chair
- Conference update
- Website update
- Hiring incentives fact sheet
- Information exchange – roundtable